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KAZAKHSTAN

SUCCESS STORY

USAID Helps Build Irrigation System

Through improved access to irrigation USAID eased tensions in the Yassy community, southern Kazakhstan.



Photo: USAID

The USAID Community Action Investment Program has brought together communities, municipal officials, and businesses to work on rebuilding roads, water systems, community centers, and schools.

The Yassy community near the city of Turkistan, southern Kazakhstan, has been swelling in size as urban residents migrated out from the city, displacing farmers, many of whom no longer had access to reliable irrigation. Mounting tensions eased after USAID helped Yassy build an irrigation system to benefit local farmers.

The community project was implemented through the USAID Community Action Investment Program, a three-year, \$22.2 million effort, implemented by ACDI/VOCA. The USAID program collaborated with the local water users' association, which is responsible for ensuring the equitable distribution of water and for the channel's maintenance. With USAID support, seven kilometers of irrigation channels were dredged mechanically and manually. Two wells also were rehabilitated, including the installation of new pump and filtering equipment. Some 900 hectares of irrigated land became suitable for planting grain, vegetables, fruit and other trees.

Galymzhan Djalilov, one of the Yassy farmers affected by the USAID program, said he was happy with the irrigation canal rehabilitation. "When I decided to start my own farm, I bought a garden plot close to the irrigation canal. However, due to the poor irrigation system, my trees started to dry up and did not bear fruit. I worried that my investment and hard labor of three years had been wasted," said Djalilov. "Now I am confident that my garden will survive and that I can develop my business and ensure financial stability for my family."

In addition to improving irrigation and reducing tensions in the Yassy community, the USAID program funded hundreds of long- and short-term jobs in the area. In Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries, the program has pulled together communities, municipal officials and businesses to work on building roads, water systems, community centers, and on rehabilitating schools. These collaborative initiatives have benefited hundreds of thousands of people in the economically most vulnerable communities across the region.